

Since 1990

The “Greatest Generation,” the Cold War era, and today’s Air and Space Expeditionary Forces fighting two wars at once all have one thing in common – people. It takes Airmen to fly and fight.

As in the past, the spotlight today is on aircraft pilots – they are the heroes on the flightline – but Airman Sarah Delgado thinks that focus will change to aircraft maintainers.

“If our future aircraft won’t need pilots, that means we maintainers will be more important,” said the 19-year-old aircraft fuel systems apprentice stationed at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C.

Since Airman Delgado entered the Air Force in August 2006, she and others who took the oath of enlistment about that same time are the future of the Air Force.

“I can’t speak for everybody, but I think our generation will be more independent thinkers — we are so much into video games and being exposed to new, upcoming technology. I think that will be our strength in the future.”





An A-10A Thunderbolt II aircraft flies over a target area during Operation Desert Storm. It was designed specially for the close air support mission and has the ability to combine large military loads, long loiter and wide combat radius, which proved to be vital assets to the United States and its allies during Operation Desert Storm and Operation Noble Anvil.



"Gulf Lesson One is the value of airpower."

**George H.W. Bush
41st President, 1989 to 1993.**



Third Security Police Group horse patrol Airmen make their rounds in the aftermath of the volcanic eruption of Mount Pinatubo, June 8 – July 2, 1991. More than 15,000 evacuees were removed from the area as a part of the U.S. military's Operation Fiery Vigil when fallen ash disrupted operations at Clark Air Base, Philippines.



Now retired Col. Eileen Collins became the first woman astronaut in July 1991.



F-16A Fighting Falcons and F-15C and F-15E Eagles fly over burning oil fields during Desert Storm. Operation Desert Storm began Jan. 17, 1991.



Dec. 20, 1989 - Jan. 4, 1990

In Operation Just Cause, the United States restored democracy to Panama. After catching Manuel Noriega, C-130 Hercules extradited him to the United States.

Aug. 2, 1990

Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Aug. 7, 1990

Operation Desert Shield began to protect Saudi Arabia from Iraqi aggression and liberate Kuwait.

Aug. 22, 1990

The Air Force Gulf presence required more Air Force Reservists to volunteer for the effort. More than 20,000 Reservists and 12,000 Air National Guard Airmen served in Operation Desert Shield and its successor, Operation Desert Storm.

Jan. 17, 1991

Operation Desert Storm began with Air Force air strikes.

Jan. 27, 1991

Air supremacy is declared over Iraq after 10 days of aerial combat.

Feb. 28, 1991

Desert Storm ended. Nearly 2,000 Air Force aircraft comprised 75 percent of the total number of coalition airpower. Satellite technology played a vital role in communications and navigation. Air Force tankers delivered billions of pounds of fuel and carried thousands of passengers and tons of cargo.



"The Air Force has so many great opportunities out there, and all you have to do is apply."

Capt. Nicole Malachowski, the first woman pilot to fly with the elite U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron, better known as the Thunderbirds.



Kurdish women pose for a photograph outside their home. Operation Provide Comfort began April 5, 1991, and provided relief supplies to Kurdish refugees. Later, it provided aerial protection for a security zone in northern Iraq so the Kurds could return to their homes.



An F-16 Fighting Falcon hit the ramp in front of a C-141 Starlifter setting it on fire March 23, 1994, at Pope Air Force Base, N.C. The crash spread wreckage and burning fuel into an area where para-troopers waited to board the aircraft. The accident killed 24 Soldiers and injured more than 100 others.



On the flightline, an Airman greets his wife at Misawa Air Base, Japan, following his deployment supporting Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Southern Watch. Operation Southern Watch began in August 1992.

June 8 – July 2, 1991

Clark Air Base, Philippines, is evacuated during Operation Fiery Vigil following the eruption of Mount Pinatubo. The United States returned Clark to the Philippines on Nov. 26, 1991, ending a military history that started in 1903.

Sept. 27, 1991

President George H.W. Bush ordered that Strategic Air Command alert cease the following day, representing the end of the Cold War. SAC aircrews had been on alert since October 1957.

Jan. 30, 1992

Air Force Space Command assumed control of Department of Defense satellites and the operation and management of the Air Force Satellite Control Network.

June 1, 1992

The Air Force inactivated Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command and Military Airlift Command. It activated Air Combat Command and Air Mobility Command, comprising most of the resources of the inactivated commands.

July 1, 1992

The Air Force Logistics Command and Air Force Systems Command were inactivated and reintegrated to form Air Force Materiel Command.

Aug. 18, 1992

Operation Southern Watch began.



"Core values make the military what it is; without them, we cannot succeed. They are values that instill confidence, earn lasting respect, and create willing followers. They are the values that anchor resolve in the most difficult situations. They are the values that buttress mental and physical courage when we enter combat. In essence, they are the three pillars of professionalism that provide the foundation for military leadership at every level."

Sheila W. Widnall
18th Secretary of the Air Force



Nineteen Airmen died and hundreds were injured in the terrorist attack at Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, on June 25, 1996. At the time, it was the worst terrorist attack against the American military since the bombing of a Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1983.



An EF-111 Raven makes the approach for an in-flight refueling mission in support of a no-fly zone north of the 36 degree parallel from Iraqi air and ground incursion.



Crewmembers aboard a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft prepare to offload the wounded from Balad Air Base, Iraq, at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia on Jan. 17, 2007. The C-17 joined the Air Force fleet in June 1993.

Jan. 3, 1993

America and Russia signed the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, reducing the number of nuclear weapons in missile silos and carried by bombers.

Jan. 13, 1993

Air Force Maj. Susan Helms, a member of the Space Shuttle "Endeavor" crew, became the first U.S. military woman in space.

April 12, 1993

In Operation Deny Flight, the Air Force provided most of the forces used to enforce a no-fly zone over Bosnia.

Aug. 6, 1993

Dr. Sheila Widnall became the first woman to serve as an armed services secretary when she took the oath of office as Secretary of the Air Force.

Jan. 13, 1994

The final F-15 Eagle of the 32nd Fighter Group departed Soesterberg Air Base, ending 40 years of Air Force operations in the Netherlands.

June 30, 1994

U.S. Air Forces in Europe ends its presence in Berlin, 46 years after the beginning of the Berlin airlift, with the inactivation of Detachment 1, 435th Airlift Wing.



"The bottom line is not dollars per aircraft but overall capability per dollar."

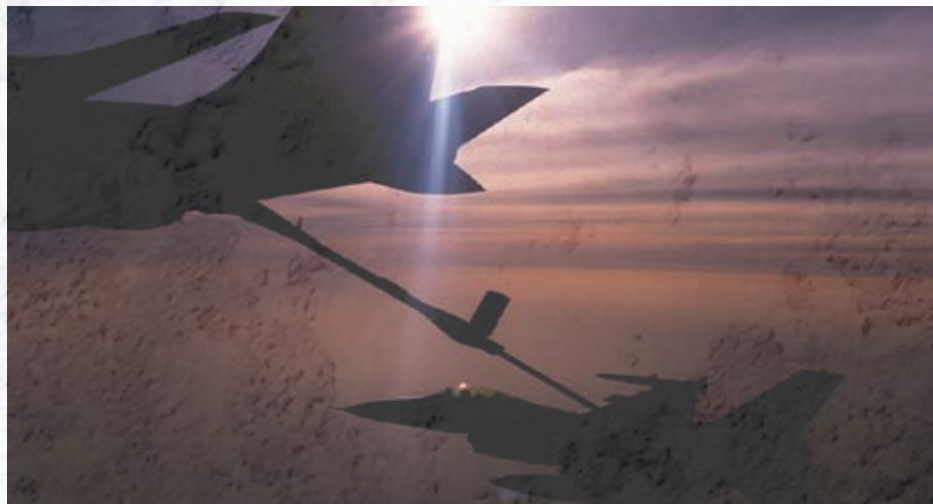
Gen. Charles Horner
In Southwest Asia, he directed all U.S. and allied air operations for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, 1990 to 1991.



Several F-16CJ Fighting Falcon and Wild Weasel aircraft, assigned to the 77TH Fighter Squadron "Gamblers" at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., prepare to take off for an interdiction flight at Aviano Air Base, Italy, in support of Operation Allied Force. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization operation began March 24, 1999, and suspended air strikes against Yugoslavia after its president agreed to withdraw Serb forces from Kosovo.

A recovery team carefully climbs to the summit of Gold Dust Peak in Eagle, Colo., as they search the area for the wreckage of an A-10 Thunderbolt that had disappeared from radar April 2, 1997. It's still unknown why the pilot crashed into the mountain after pulling away from a training mission.





An F-16 Fighting Falcon from the 510th Fighter Squadron, Aviano Air Base, Italy, refuels behind a KC-135 Stratotanker during a Combat Air Patrol mission May 3, 1999, in Yugoslavia. CAP missions provided air cover for NATO Operation Allied Force strike missions from March 24 to June 10, 1999.



An A-10 Thunderbolt II from the 81st Fighter Squadron, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, pulls away from a tanker (not shown) after refueling on the way to Serbian targets during Operation Allied Force.

Feb. 3, 1995

Air Force Lt. Col. Eileen M. Collins became the first woman space shuttle pilot.

Jan. 9, 1996

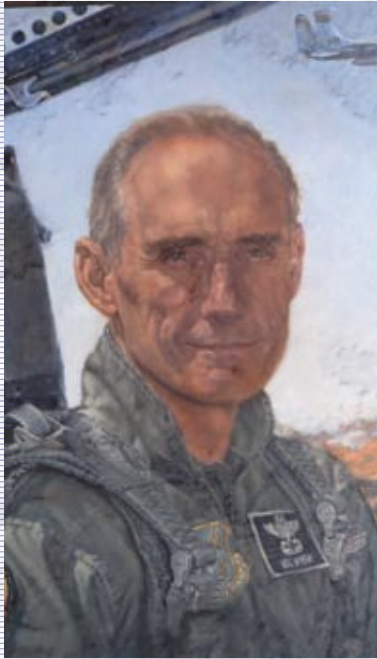
Operation Provide Promise, the longest sustained humanitarian airlift in history, ended, after delivering 62,802 metric tons of relief cargo to Sarajevo and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

March 24, 1999

Operation Allied Force in Kosovo began and resulted in the premiere of the B-2 Spirit bomber in combat.

March 27, 1999

A computer virus called "Melissa" swept across the Internet and destroyed electronic programs and databases. Air Combat Command antivirus programs helped Air Force systems escape serious damage.



"I believe Operation Desert Shield is proving just how capable and ready our forces are — active, Reserve, and Guard."

Gen. Merrill A. "Tony" McPeak during an Air Force Association symposium in February 1991. The general was the 14th Air Force Chief of Staff, 1990 to 1994, during which he instituted the concept of an Air Expeditionary Force. For three weeks in 1993, he was both the chief of staff of the Air Force and secretary of the Air Force — something that has yet to be repeated.



Senior Airman Jimmy Jones and Staff Sgt. Max Talley patrol the perimeter of Howard Air Force Base, Panama. The base had more than a dozen miles of unfenced jungle perimeter. The Air Force announced the transfer of Howard AFB to Panama on Nov. 2, 1999.



Tom Frello and son Zachary look at their brand new van that was destroyed in a tornado. The F5 devastated a good portion of Oklahoma City, Okla., just barely missing Tinker Air Force Base, on May 3, 1999. The tornado caught the outer edge of the base, which suffered minor damage.





A C-17 Globemaster III from Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., offloads supplies in April 1999 at Tirana Airfield, Albania, the base camp for members of Operation Sustain Hope, a humanitarian airlift counterpart of the ongoing Operation Allied Force.

Oct. 1, 1999

Aerospace Expeditionary Force 1 deployed to Southwest Asia. This was the first deployment of 10 such forces that rotated. It's a system that is in use today.

Nov. 2, 1999

The Air Force announced the official transfer of Howard Air Force Base to Panama.

Jan. 20, 2005

President George W. Bush was inaugurated. As a pilot in the Texas Air National Guard, Bush is the first American president to have served as a member of the Air Force. His father was a Navy pilot.

Feb. 21, 2001

An AQ-1 Predator fired a Hellfire missile and hit a tank at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., becoming the first unmanned aerial vehicle to destroy a ground target.

April 22 - 23, 2001

The AQ-4A Global Hawk completed the first nonstop crossing of the Pacific Ocean by a unmanned aerial vehicle, and demonstrated the potential of the world's most advanced high-altitude, long-range, remotely-operated aircraft.

Aug. 24, 2001

At Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., Airmen imploded the last of the Minuteman III missile silos in accordance with the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.



"Tomorrow's Air Force must be and will be more agile, more compact and more lethal than ever — ensuring global air, space and Cyberspace dominance for the United States as we enter the 21st Century."

Gen. T. Michael Moseley
Air Force Chief of Staff



Emergency response vehicles line the area around the Pentagon, and smoke clouds the horizon shortly after a terrorist attack Sept. 11, 2001. President George W. Bush announced a war on terrorism and initiated homeland-defense efforts, including Operation Noble Eagle, which involved combat air patrols within the United States.



Military members render honors as fire and rescue workers unfurled a huge American flag over the side of the Pentagon during rescue and recovery work following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack. The attack came at approximately 9:40 a.m. as a hijacked commercial airliner, originating from Washington, D.C.'s Dulles International Airport, was flown into the southern side of the building facing Virginia Highway 27.

Sept. 11, 2001

Terrorists crashed civilian airliners into the World Trade Center in New York, and one into the Pentagon. About 3,000 people died. Another hijacked aircraft was overtaken by the passengers and crashed into a field in Pennsylvania. The Air Force immediately helped with homeland-defense efforts marking the start of Operation Noble Eagle.

Sept. 14, 2001

The president authorized the call up of 50,000 reservists to active duty for the war on terrorism.

Oct. 7, 2001

America struck back at the Taliban with the start of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Feb. 4, 2002

An unmanned aerial vehicle destroyed an enemy target for the first time when a remotely-controlled MX-1B Predator fired a Hellfire missile and killed a group of al-Qaida members in Afghanistan.

March 4, 2002

Two Airmen were among seven servicemen killed in two helicopter assaults in Afghanistan during Operation Anaconda.



"Hundreds of thousands of American servicemen and women are deployed across the world in the war on terror. By bringing hope to the oppressed and delivering justice to the violent, they are making America more secure."

President George W. Bush

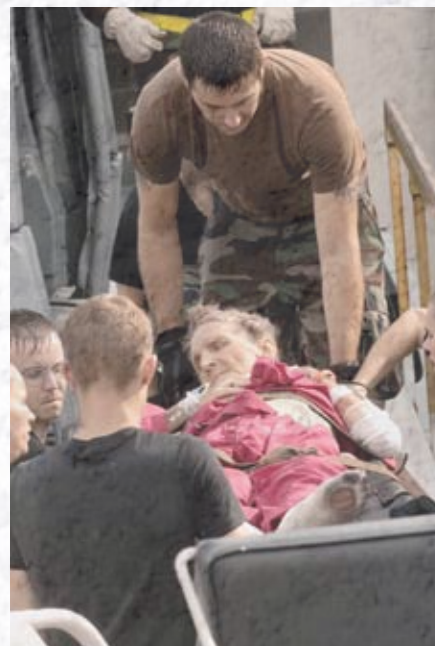
At Balad, Iraq, contingency aero-medical staging facility team members prepare a critical care patient for transport on a C-17 Globemaster III to Landstuhl, Germany, Feb. 14, 2007, where he received follow-on care for his wounds.





Col. Jay Johannigman (right), deputy commander of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Medical Group, and Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Lorraine Potter, Air Force chief of the Chaplain Service, visit a local Iraqi boy being treated in the emergency room for head injuries at Tallil Air Base, Iraq, during Operation Iraqi Freedom in October 2003.

Air Force members prepare patients for evacuation at the Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans Sept. 1, 2005, during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.



Oct. 1, 2002

U.S. Northern Command is activated as a new unified command.

Jan. 16, 2003

The Space Shuttle "Columbia" broke up over Texas and killed all seven astronauts, including Air Force Col. Rick Husband and Lt. Col. Michael P. Anderson.

March 19, 2003

Operation Iraqi Freedom began after Saddam Hussein ignored a U.S. presidential ultimatum that required Hussein and his sons to leave Iraq in 48 hours. F-117 Nighthawk stealth aircraft started the shock and awe.

Aug. 30 – Oct. 10, 2005

Hurricane Katrina lashed out at Air Force bases in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Many Airmen were evacuated. Airmen were also involved in the rescue and recovery of civilians after the mighty storm. The devastation was particularly bad at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., where the Air Force initially distributed nearly \$90 million to speed repair of the base's storm-ravaged infrastructure.

Jan. 29, 2006

The Iraqi Air Force makes history when it flies its first C-130 flight with an all-Iraqi aircrew outside of Iraq.



"Just as Billy Mitchell endeavored to prove the potential of airpower to a skeptical nation, we must now prove the critical importance of Cyberspace as a warfighting domain."

**Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force**



Airman 1st Class Emily Starcher helps Sri Lankan relief workers unload boxes of vegetables from an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter during an Operation Unified Assistance mission at Dambula, Sri Lanka, Jan. 12, 2005. The Kadena Air Base, Japan, Airman and others helped bring food, medicines and supplies to people affected by a Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami.

Tech. Sgt. John Webb and Staff Sgt. Clinton Tips, while stationed at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., update anti-virus software for Air Force units to assist in the prevention of cyberspace hackers. The Air Force established the Cyberspace Command in November 2006. The new command was designated as the 8th Air Force.





Airman First Class Josh Huffman, C-130 loadmaster, drops a box of 10,000 warning leaflets over the southeastern mountains of Afghanistan Mar. 6, 2007. The leaflets were used to communicate with Taliban extremists, warning them not to interfere with Coalition activities.

May 25, 2006

Air Force and host nation officials inactivated the 932nd Air Control Squadron, after more than 54 years as Iceland's first line of defense in a ceremony at Naval Air Station Keflavik, Iceland.

Oct. 14, 2006

The president accepted the Air Force Memorial in a dedication ceremony attended by military leaders of the past and present in Arlington, Va. The memorial is composed of three bold and graceful spires soaring skyward and pays tribute to Airmen – past, present and future.

June 7, 2006

Coalition air forces killed al-Qaida terrorist leader Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi in an air strike. Space assets, such as the GPS satellite and space situational awareness, played a crucial role.

Nov. 16, 2006

The first operational CV-22 Osprey was delivered to the Air Force Special Operations Command.

June 12, 2007

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. T. Michael Moseley awarded six Airmen the Air Force Combat Action Medal during a ceremony at the Air Force Memorial. These Airmen were the first in the Air Force to receive the new medal.

Sept. 18, 2007

The Air Force celebrates 60 years of service.